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College search...

The Most Popular College Majors

Find out which college degrees are the most popular nationwide.

Photo: Thinkstock

Deciding on a major for college can be one of the most daunting and important choices any student makes. Making the right decision plays a big part in your future happiness and career satisfaction.

It's often hard to know exactly where you'll end up after college, and changing majors can cost you extra time and money.

> *Some majors are more popular because they're thought to be "easy."*

We've compiled a list of the most popular college majors just so you can get a sense of what other students are choosing.

Most Popular College Majors

These college degree choices are not ranked in any way, and it should be noted that they aren't popular because they necessarily guarantee the most money out of college.

1. Communications Studies: This is a broad field that overlaps with several academic programs. It can lead to jobs in journalism, public relations and advertising.

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Get on track!

- High School Senior Checklist (/college-advice-tips/6BCDBA67/High-School-Senior-Timeline-and-Checklist/)
- High School Junior Checklist (/college-advice-tips/BFDD4D28/High-School-Junior-Timeline-and-Checklist/)
- High School Sophomore Checklist (/college-advice-tips/8A88B7F9/High-School-Sophomore-Timeline-and-Checklist/)
- High School Freshman Checklist (/college-advice-tips/BCF1A04A/High-School-Freshman-Timeline-and-Checklist/)

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2. Psychology (/colleges/major/F3984EE3/Psychology/): Common areas of focus are career counseling, mental health, young-adult psychology and school counseling.

3. Engineering (/colleges/major/FCF8A86C/Engineering/): This can often lead to high-paying jobs, but be aware that the course load can be demanding.

4. Criminal Justice (/colleges/major/395DC581/Criminal-Justice/): This major exposes students to courses in cybercrime, psychology, sociology, legal studies and forensic sciences.

5. Nursing (/colleges/major/BF9655ED/Nursing/): As with any science major, expect courses in chemistry and anatomy, in addition to medicine-based classes in ethics, pharmacology and health-care policy.

6. Biology (/colleges/major/FE772ACA/Biology/): General science courses such as chemistry and physics will apply, along with options in genetic engineering, personalized medicine and stem-cell treatment.

7. Computer Science (/colleges/major/A4BB693A/Computer-Science/): The emphasis in this college degree will be on programming, networking and information technology.

8. Education (/colleges/major/C70BD756/Education/): In order to learn how to teach children, you'll study how to deal with special-needs students, literacy education and psychology of children.

9. Business (/colleges/major/8EEC7E7A/Business/): Topics can include finance, marketing, accounting, management and information systems.

10. Economics (/colleges/major/AF984699/Economics/): Get ready for a lot of critical thinking and math with this major. The focus in economics is on how individuals, businesses and government choose to spend their time and money.

11. Political Science: This is the study of politics and government, so expect courses on communications and critical thinking.

12. English (/colleges/major/28CF1111/English-Language-and-Literature/): Analysis of literature and writing will be the focus here, looking at works of poetry, fiction and nonfiction.

Popular Majors at Different Types of Schools

Out of the eight Ivy League schools, the most popular majors are engineering, social sciences and **history (/colleges/major/84A2294B/History/)**.

At small, private liberal arts colleges such as **Vassar College (/colleges/081FFA3E/New-York/Poughkeepsie/Vassar-College/)**, the most popular majors are psychology, English, political science, biology and economics.

At historically black colleges such as **Clark Atlanta University (/colleges/9AE93A6A/Georgia/Atlanta/Clark-Atlanta-University/)**, the top degrees are business, communications, psychology and education.

Why Are They Popular?

Many of these majors are popular simply because they are broad enough in scope that they could allow you to pursue a number of different careers after graduation. This is particularly true of a business degree, which provides the leadership, financial and team-building skills necessary for any job.

Some majors are more popular because they're thought to be "easy" degrees to attain. English, history, and communications majors traditionally fall under this category. And while earning a degree with as little effort as possible can allow you to explore college life and find out what your passions are, always be sure to also pick something that interests you.

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